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Page 12
Cols. 1,2,3,4 & 5

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San Antonio Crowd Mobs JFK

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SAN ANTONIO, Texas — Near chaos followed carefully planned dedication ceremonies at the U.S. Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine here Thursday afternoon when President Kennedy crashed up strategically placed lines of air policemen.

After dedicating its new buildings, Kennedy walked to the [illegible] in which four citizens were spending their 17th day in a pressure chamber at a simulated altitude of 27,500 feet.

Then, instead of walking back to the convertible which awaited him a block away, he ordered: "Bring the cars over here!"

Several hundred spectators caught on quickly, took a short cut and proceed to be faster on their feet than the air policemen or even the Secret Service men. Before the lines could be reformed, the spectators surrounded the President and Mrs. Kennedy, trying to shake their hands or just touch them.

The President spoke [illegible] the provision of tuition that had guaranteed the other movements of the President on his trip to San Antonio.

Finally, they managed to get the Kennedys into the open convertible with Gov. and Mrs. John Connally and made their getaway, turning around and outdistancing four press buses which had followed the official motorcade up the dead-end street.

About the only ones who remained calm, under the circumstances, were the four airmen in the space chamber, undergoing a 30-day test for Project Apollo. Kennedy had just taken a look at them and was assured that the experiment was progressing nicely.

The departure scene contained more enthusiasm than almost any other segment of the President's 2-hour visit to San Antonio. For the most part, it was a reserved and curious crowd which lined the streets as his motorcade traveled from international airport through downtown San Antonio to Brooks Air Force Base.

A few pickets [illegible] the airport [illegible] signs which read, "Racial segregation receives federal support in San Antonio" and "No favors but rights."

The most enthusiastic group along the motorcade route was the highly integrated student body at Breckenridge High School, displaying a sign which said: "Breckenridge High School welcomes President and Mrs. Kennedy."

Police Chief George W. Bichel estimated that 100,000 people lined the motorcade route, after the scene reception at the airport where the Kennedys were welcomed by the Connallys and Vice President and Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson.

Estimates of the crowd at the dedication ceremony varied from 10,000, which appeared to be a reasonable estimate, to an Air Force public information officer's enthusiastic guess of 50,000 — still far short of the 70,000 which had been expected.

There were many vacancies in the special section reserved for distinguished visitors, many of whom had sharply criticized arrangements for the President's visit.

Kennedy's speech eliminated ceremonies which included the presentation of several Air Force commendations.

He promised that the concept of space "must and will go ahead."

"Last Saturday at Cape Canaveral," he said, departing from his prepared text, "I saw the new Saturn C1 Rocket Booster. When it is launched in December, it will be the largest booster in the world, carrying into space the largest payload which any country in the world ever sent into space."

Kennedy opened his speech by declaring that the New Frontier is nonpartisan.

"That is not a partisan term," he said. "It is not the exclusive property of either Democrats or Republicans.

"It refers, instead, to this nation's place in history today — to the fact that we stand on the edge of a great new era, filled with both crises and opportunities, an era to be characterized by both challenges and achievements."

Kennedy said space [illegible] in making life [illegible].

Space medical research, especially, he said, is helping to solve many down-to-earth medical problems. This is a valuable by-product of the space effort, he added.

Among those sitting on the platform behind him were astronaut Gordon Cooper and his wife, who drew a tremendous ovation upon being introduced shortly before the President arrived.

But standing on the fringe of the crowd, unable to get to their seats on the platform, were State Attorney Gen. and Mrs. Waggoner Carr and Texas House Speaker Mrs. Byron Tunnell.

They greeted the President at the San Antonio airport and later flew with him to Houston and on to Fort Worth. But the driver of their auto in the motorcade took a wrong turn upon entering Brooks Air Force Base and got separated from the other official cars.

Challenged by an airman, the two state officials were unable to produce security clearance badges and thus had to watch from the sidelines.

"We hope to catch up with the official party some time tonight," said Carr, grinning.